

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 AEC-11

AID-20 CEA-02 CIEP-02 COME-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01

INT-08 OMB-01 SCI-06 STR-08 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /212 W

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R 201645Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6956

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 4378

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UF, FR

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO

1. SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH GROMYKO'S VISIT, FEB 15-18,  
HAS BEEN TREATED BY FRENCH PRESS IN POSITIVE TERMS,  
PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IT DID LITTLE TO  
IRON OUT THE ROUGH SPOTS IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS.  
END SUMMARY.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL THE 15TH, GROMYKO MET  
FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS WITH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU. ON  
LEAVING THE ELYSEE, GROMYKO SAID IT HAD BEEN AGREED  
THAT THE BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE  
SOON. THIS STATEMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY AN OFFICIAL COMMU-  
NIQUE THE NEXT DAY, STATING THAT THE MEETING WOULD TAKE  
PLACE "NEXT MARCH, PROBABLY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE

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MONTH." GROMYKO HAD THREE SESSIONS WITH FOREIGN MIN-  
ISTER JOBERT AND A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MESSMER

OVER THE WEEKEND. IN ADDITION STATE SECRETARY DE LIP-KOWSKI ACCOMPANIED HIM ON A SIGHT-SEEING TOUR SUNDAY.

3. GROMYKO HELD A SHORT PRESS CONFERENCE JUST BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE THE 18TH. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT, TEXT OF WHICH WAS FURNISHED TO US BY SOVIET EMBASSY, HE SAID HIS TALKS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS HAD PROCEEDED "IN AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH CORRESPONDS TO THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES, BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND FRENCH PEOPLES." GROMYKO STATED THAT HE HAD FOUND A COMMON LANGUAGE WITH THE FRENCH ON "MANY LARGE INTER-NATIONAL PROBLEMS." HE SAID SEVERAL QUESTIONS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY WERE DISCUSSED, INCLUDING THE CSCE. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HE REMARKED THAT FRENCH AND SOVIET POSITIONS WERE "CLOSE" REGARDING A SETTLEMENT, AND ADDED THAT FRANCE AND THE USSR WOULD MAINTAIN "EXTREMELY CLOSE CONTACTS AND CONDUCT CONSULTATIONS ON THIS PROBLEM" GROMYKO NOTED THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE ENERGY PROBLEM INCLUDING THAT OF OIL, AND SAID THAT THE SOVIETS FAVORED DISCUSSION OF IT "BY ALL INTERESTED SIDES." FINALLY, GROMYKO SAID THAT HE HAD INVITED JOBERT FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE USSR AND THAT JOBERT HAD ACCEPTED.

4. IN ENSURING QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER MET FRENCH CRITICISM HEAD ON BY DEFENDING OVER-ALL BENEFITS OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS. CHARACTERIZING US-SOVIET DETENTE AS "POSITIVE FOR INTERNAL LIFE," HE DENIED THAT IT COULD HURT SOVIET FRENCH RELATIONS. "WE DON'T HAVE TWO POLICIES, ONE IN ONE POCKET FOR FRANCE AND ANOTHER IN ANOTHER POCKET FOR THE U.S.," HE CLAIMED. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH SIDE HAD SHOWN A GREAT DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING ON THIS SCORE, AND ADDED POINTEDLY HIS HOPE THAT IT WOULD CONTINUE. QUESTIONED ON FRENCH DEFENSE AND DISARMAMENT POLICY, GROMYKO REPLIED THAT "COMPLICATIONS AND DIFFERENCES CAN ARISE AMONG DIFFERENT COUNTRIES." HE NOTED THAT THE USSR SHARED FRENCH VIEWS ON THE ENERGY CRISIS, SUPPORTED AN UNGA MEETING ON RAW MATERIALS, AND FAVORED

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SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

5. THE FRENCH PRESS HAS VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUSLY VIEWED THE GROMYKO VISIT AS SIGNALING AN IMPROVEMENT IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS. COMMENT HAS FOCUSED ON THE JUXTAPOSITION OF GROMYKO'S VISIT WITH THE FRENCH-US CONFRONTATION AT THE WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE, AND ON SOVIET PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF APPROVAL FOR THE FRENCH INDEPENDENT STAND. THE PRESS HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE REGAINED A STAKE IN PROMOTING TIES WITH FRANCE,

WHILE FRANCE SEEKS TO REDRESS THE BALANCE WITH THE US  
BY REPAIRING RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW.

6. COMMENT. THE QUAI HAS PROMISED TO GIVE US A FULLER READ-OUT ON THE VISIT AS SOON AS THE MEMCONS HAVE BEEN APPROVED. BASED ON THE EVIDENCE AT HAND, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT WHILE THE TALKS WITH GROMYKO MAY HAVE SERVED TO CLEAR THE AIR SOMEWHAT, MAJOR PROBLEMS REMAIN BETWEEN PARIS AND MOSCOW. GROMYKO'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT WAS NOTABLY COOL, EVEN FOR HIM, FALLING SHORT OF ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE TALKS HAD EVEN TAKEN PLACE IN A "BUSINESSLIKE", MUCH LESS A "FRIENDLY" ATMOSPHERE. HE REPLIES TO QUESTIONS SUGGESTED CONTINUED FRICTION OVER FRENCH "CONDOMINIUM" CHARGES, DISARMAMENT AND DEFENSE POLICY, HINTING THAT QUESTIONS SUCH AS MBFR AND PERHAPS FRENCH EC INITIATIVES MAY HAVE BEEN RAISED UNDER THE "EUROPEAN SECURITY" RUBRIC. AMONG SPECIFIC ISSUES, ONLY ON ENERGY POLICY DID GROMYKO VOICE SUPPORT FOR FRENCH ACTIONS, AND HE ENDORSED THE ALGERIAN UNGA PROPOSAL TO WHICH THE FRENCH HAVE NOW LENT THEIR SUPPORT. HE ALSO MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONCESSION TO BITTER FRENCH COMPLAINTS OF NEGLECT, PROMISING CLOSE CONTACTS AND CONSULTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST. INDEED, THIS AREA OF CONSULTATIONS IS ONE WHICH COULD WELL LEND ITSELF TO AN ACCORD AT THE SUMMIT, IN THE FORM PERHAPS OF AN ELABORATION OF THE OCT 13, 1970 PROTOCOL AND RENEWED PROMISE THAT ITS TERMS WILL BE SCRUPULOUSLY RESPECTED. FURTHER REFINEMENT OF EXISTING ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS MIGHT BE ANOTHER CANDIDATE FOR SUMMIT ACTION.

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7. HOWEVER, IT IS REVEALING THAT THE EXACT DATES FOR THE BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU MEETING HAD STILL NOT BEEN FIXED. GRANTED THAT TECHNICAL SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES COULD BE RESPONSIBLE, ONE CANNOT ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION THAT THE WAY WOULD BE SPEEDILY CLEARED FOR THIS LONG-HERALDED AND REPEATEDLY ANNOUNCED ENCOUNTER IF THERE WAS SUFFICIENT POLITICAL WILL AND INTEREST ON BOTH SIDES.

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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